

Was Pres. Shonts (The New York Traction Magnate) "Vamped"?

How "My Friend Amanda Thomas," Chorus Girl, Twice Married and Twice

Won the Old Millionaire's Affection, and Turns Up With a "Will" That Gives Her His Estate

MUNICIPAL COURT OF THE CITY OF NEW YORK
BOROUGH OF MANHATTAN NINTH MUNICIPAL COURT DISTRICT.

GLENBROOK COMPANY, INC. Landlord

Mrs. Theodore P. Shonts Tenant

THE PEOPLE OF THE STATE OF NEW YORK.

TO THE TENANT

ABOVE NAMED AND DESCRIBED:

You are hereby required forthwith to remove from the premises

designated and described as follows:

The.....rooms on the 4th floor, northwest side in house known as No. 570 Park Ave. in the 9th Municipal Court District in the Borough of Manhattan, in the City of New York, or show cause before the Municipal Court of the City of New York, to be held in the 11th District, in the Borough of Manhattan, at the Court Room, Part 1, 3rd and 5th West 5th Street, 624 MADISON AVENUE in the said Borough of said City, on the 26th day of DECEMBER, 1919, at nine o'clock in the.....Forenoon of that day, why the possession of said property or premises should not be delivered to the said Landlord.

Dated, New York, DECEMBER 23, 1919 *Martin H. Early* Clerk of said Court

Photograph of the eviction notice served on Mrs. Shonts by an officer on Christmas Eve, notifying her "You are hereby required forthwith to remove," etc.

CHAPTER VIII.

(Continued from Last Sunday)

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READERS of this page last Sunday will recall the sad tragedy of President Shonts's funeral that September day last year when the widow, Mrs. Shonts, in the majestic dignity of her outraged feelings, made one and only one demand—that the woman who had "vamped" her husband should not be present during the funeral services. And Amanda Thomas, like an outcast, faded into the shadows out of sight. It was a humiliating blow for Amanda to swallow—but she dared not risk Mrs. Shonts carrying out her warning that if the Thomas woman was at the church she would arise and leave the service.

Such an act of protest Amanda knew would attract the attention of reporters at the funeral, and the scandal might be uncovered in the newspapers. Publicity was the one thing Amanda did not want.

But if Mrs. Thomas suffered humiliation this day from Mrs. Shonts—Mrs. Shonts had suffered endless humiliations for ten years at the hands of Amanda Thomas. And now the tide was about to turn. The light of exposure was soon to strip the mask from Amanda Thomas and point the finger of Shame at her.

For ten years Mrs. Thomas had dominated Shonts. She had ruled him, she had shared his apartment, his automobile, his check book. She had insulted, ridiculed, abused, sworn at Mrs. Shonts, the wife, and the daughters. And as she drove to the big shops in her admirer's automobile and had her unlimited wants charged to the account of "Mrs. T. P. Shonts," Amanda laughed at the real, the true, the genuine Mrs. Shonts whom she saw trudging along the avenue on foot, buying sparingly, paying cash from her meagre allowance, AND FORBIDDEN TO USE THE ACCOUNTS IN THE BIG SHOPS WHICH STOOD IN MRS. T. P. SHONT'S OWN NAME, BUT WERE RESERVED FOR HER HUSBAND'S MIS- TRESS!

We read of such situations in novels. We see them in the movies—the richly dressed and overdressed painted women, cigarette smoking, cocktail drinking, vulgar and profane in their coarse talk; we see these notorious Vampires, outcasts, nestling in their soft furs and boisterously enjoying the pitiful humiliation of the wife and children they have wronged.

But these people are actresses. These "Vampires" are decent women earning their living in the movies.

So also the "millionaire" who draws forth his check-book and pays the bills of the "Vamp," is only an actor dressed up to imitate a pretended president of some huge imaginary corporation.

And everybody in the audience knows all this—the "Vamp," the "millionaire," the "injured wife," the "actor" with the "title" are all actors and actresses. Of course, the parts are a little overdrawn, we think—it's all so much in the movies, but no one supposes it happens in real life.

And yet it all did happen in this real life triangle of Shonts and his wife and the Thomas woman.

The "millionaire" was a genuine millionaire—the "president" of the company was indeed the president of one of the biggest corporations in all New York, the great Interborough.

And the "injured wife" was shamefully cast aside; a wife who had been the maker of her husband's fortune, herself the daughter of the Governor of a State and the mother of charming daughters, one of whom had married one of the proudest titles in France.

And the Vampire—?

How nearly does Amanda Caskie Thomas fill the role of a Vampire? And the readers of these pages have not yet been told many, many episodes which are more astonishing than anything heretofore printed.

WHEN Theodore P. Shonts, president of New York's rapid transit lines, died last Summer the scandal which, during his lifetime, he had been able to smother soon burst into flame. And no wonder.

From the mystery and secrecy of the dead man's sick-room emerged a remarkable figure—Mrs. Amanda Caskie Thomas. This woman had been Shonts's intimate companion, sharing his apartment, his automobile, his vacation outings and his check book. This former chorus girl had complete domination over the old traction magnate—while she and her little son nestled close to Shonts and his money she forbade her servants to allow Shonts's own wife and daughters to come near him.

Seizing everything worth carting away from his town apartment and country house, Mrs. Thomas produced an itemized bill of sale from Shonts of everything from a shoe horn to a baby grand piano, and in due time turned up with a "last will" leaving her the bulk of her millionaire admirer's estate. The old traction multi-millionaire, in some way, had been thoroughly well stripped of his millions! Did "my friend Amanda Thomas," as he calls her in his "will," get it all?

The widow, Mrs. Shonts, has appealed to the courts to throw out this very suspicious and peculiar "last will," and she has also begun actions to get the

Shonts millions away from Mrs. Thomas, who, she swears, debauched Shonts and lured him into her power like a Vampire, by "her artifices, immoralities and wiles."

Mrs. Amanda C. Thomas stands forth as a very remarkable figure. Her intimacy with Shonts she carried on with brazen indifference to what servants and others saw, said or thought. Surrounded by rich friends of herself and Shonts and the Interborough lawyers, she seems to have felt secure from exposure or legal consequences.

But the skeleton has been dragged forth from "my friend Amanda's" closet by the court proceedings begun by Mrs. Shonts. Did Mrs. Thomas "Vamp" President Shonts out of his fortune, as Mrs. Shonts, in effect, asserts? The courts will be asked to decide whether Mrs. Thomas shall be permitted to keep the Shonts fortune while the widow and children are left almost penniless. And it is a great moral issue as well as a legal issue, as Rev. Dr. Stratton, of Calvary Baptist Church, pointed out in a recent sermon in these words:

"If the wronged wife is finally robbed and the other woman gets the money, will not the tendency be for every weak girl in the city to ask herself the question, 'If she did these things and got away with it and now flourishes, why may not I?'"

Shonts became very vindictive against his wife for refusing to free him to marry Mrs. Thomas, and he seemed to enjoy inflicting punishments upon her. But Mrs. Shonts was not the only sufferer—the unfortunate daughters were also the victims of their father's unholy relations with the Thomas woman.

As has already been noted, Shonts was always urging his family to go abroad, and stay abroad. It was an awful nuisance to have a wife and children around when he and Amanda wanted to be quiet and happy together, without people wondering why, with a wife in town, Shonts should be running around with another woman.

And so it was that the daughters were in France in July, 1914, when Shonts arrived in Europe with Amanda to spend the Summer touring France and Germany. But even in Europe the daughters were, in this case, quite an embarrassment, because here the time had come when Shonts wanted to bring his Amanda abroad, and he didn't want them in the way.

So Mr. Shonts ordered his two daughters to go to Switzerland, saying that he would join them there after a while. Thus Shonts chased his daughters out of Paris and made the road free for Amanda and himself to rattle around the gay French capital without running into members of his family. Shonts had landed in Germany with Amanda, and it was from Germany that he sent his orders to his daughters in Paris to get out and to go to Switzerland. After due time Shonts came to Switzerland, while Mrs. Thomas went on to Paris. It was at the very eve of the outbreak of the war. Shonts could not get it through his head that a great European conflict was about to blaze forth. His daughter, the Duchess de Chaulnes, being a member of one of the great families of France, was better informed. She was warned by people high in the government service in France to leave Switzerland and come back to France without a moment's delay, because when the news of the beginning of hostilities was spread abroad it would be impossible to find room on any trains in any direction.

So when Mr. Shonts nonchalantly arrived in Switzerland his daughters told him with great earnestness that there was not a moment to lose, and that they must immediately return to Paris. Rather reluctantly Shonts accepted their advice, and he and his daughters Theodora and Marguerite managed to get seats on the last open train that left Switzerland for Paris before the border was closed.

Arriving in Paris, they took a taxi at the station and were proceeding toward the Hotel Majestic, where Shonts had procured reservations for them through the American Ambassador, Mr. Herriek, when Mr. Shonts, glancing out the window of the cab, said, "Why, there's Herriek now!" And he stopped the cab.

Ambassador Herriek saw them draw up, and turned toward Shonts.

"Hello, Shonts," he said. "Glad you got in in time. Here's a letter that some woman left at the Embassy to be delivered to you. I brought it along, thinking you might be on this train."

Mr. Herriek knew of Mrs. Thomas, as everyone in Paris did. He looked at the daughters silently and somewhat embarrassed as he handed the note to Shonts. The girls turned their faces away, knowing perfectly well who was referred to by "some woman."

Shonts read the note, and after thanking Ambassador Herriek told the taxi driver to hurry on to the Hotel Majestic. When they came to register he said to the clerk:

"Two rooms only; one for the Duchess de Chaulnes and one for Miss Marguerite Shonts."

"But, father," Marguerite Shonts exclaimed, "surely you will not leave us here alone! Why, there may be a revolution to-night. Women may be in great danger, the embassy has warned us; you heard what Ambassador Herriek said just now. Please remain with us and don't go to —"

"I am sorry," Shonts replied brusquely, "but I have to keep a business engagement right away—very important business. I do not know when I can get back. I won't take a room now. I will put up some place if I can't get in here later on." And Shonts hurried away.

From the chauffeur the girls learned that Shonts drove directly to the Hotel Crillon, where Mrs. Thomas occupied a suite—bedroom, bath and salon. The note which Mr. Herriek delivered was her letter telling Shonts where he

would find her in Paris. The daughters were left at the Hotel Majestic without protection until the Duchess d'Uzes, of the famous de Chaulnes family, heard of their plight and hurried to them and arranged for their protection in case of a revolution. Many friends heard they were there alone and called, and they were painfully embarrassed in having to explain their presence alone at the Hotel Majestic, while everybody knew that President Shonts was at the Hotel Crillon with the Thomas woman.

All the baggage, including even the daughters' personal linen, was at the Hotel Crillon, packed with the clothes of their father. Their luggage was mixed in with that of "the other woman." Whenever they needed anything they were obliged to send to Mrs. Thomas, even for their night clothes.

But that was not all. The most distressing part of it was yet to come.

Of course Europe was no place to stay in if it was about to be swept by the conflagration of a great war. Shonts wanted to get out of Europe with his Amanda, and he could not dodge the responsibility of also providing steamship accommodations for his daughters. There was a tremendous rush for any kind of reservation on all the ships leaving for America. If there had been time and opportunity Shonts would have booked his daughters on one ship and he and Mrs. Thomas would have taken passage on a different ship. But it was only by hard work and using his influence to the utmost that Shonts was able to procure reservations on a steamship leaving for America in a few days from an English port.

As soon as Shonts had made sure of his reservations he notified his daughters, who were stopping at the Majestic in Paris, that they should take the channel boat from France to England on the following day unless they wanted to travel with their father and Mrs. Thomas that same day.

The children elected to follow Shonts and the Thomas woman, and took the channel boat the day after their father had left France. Shonts went to the Hotel Crillon in London with Mrs. Thomas, and procured a room for his two daughters at the Hyde Park Hotel. The steamer was to sail from Liverpool shortly, and Shonts went on ahead to Liverpool with Mrs. Thomas, ordering the children to follow by a separate train. They asked for some money with which to make purchases of sweaters and deck clothes for the steamship trip, but Shonts refused. On the little Irish tugboat which took the passengers from the dock to the steamer lying in the harbor Shonts approached his daughters and said:

"Now, I don't want any foolishness on this trip, and I don't want any scenes, do you girls hear? Mrs. Thomas is on board. And I want to impress upon you—no scenes!"

"No, father, there will be no scenes," said Marguerite. "As far as we are concerned, I may assure you. We understand the emergency."

Theodora, the Duchess de Chaulnes, was busy with her son, the little Duke, and Mr. Shonts continued addressing himself chiefly to his daughter Marguerite.

"Well, I want you to understand a lot of things. And one of them is this—we all are going to eat at the same table. I have made the reservations with the dining room steward."

Marguerite looked at her sister, the Duchess, in dismay. They knew that with Mrs. Thomas was her married sister, Mrs. Plass. This meant that Shonts expected his daughters to sit at the table and eat their meals aboard ship with the Thomas woman and her sister. This would mean an open acknowledgment before the entire ship's company that the daughters accepted their father's mistress. Among the notable persons aboard the ship were several whom the Shonts girls knew socially. Some were friends of the famous de Chaulnes family of France. Mr. Shonts's disgusting proposition meant that he had rigged a situation whereby his unhappy daughters must accept as companion and social equal this creature who was already notorious.

What was to be done?

There was not a moment of hesitation. Instantly Marguerite looked her father in the eye and the Duchess, turning from buttoning the coat of the little Duke, fixed her gaze upon her father, and both said:

"Oh, no, father! This is impossible. We will not eat at the same time."

The tug was crowded, and Mr. Shonts set his jaw to